

Message Text

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60

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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R 131242Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9988

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, EC

SUBJ: TWO NEW DETENTIONS ORDERED

REF: QUITO 683

1. IN A SOMEWHAT BELATED REACTION, MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT POVEDA LATE LAST WEEK CONFIRMED THAT AN ARREST ORDER HAS BEEN ISSUED AGAINST SOCIALIST PARTY CHIEF GONZALO OLEAS FOR HIS REMARKS IN QUITO AT THE JANUARY 28 ELOY ALFARO COMMEMORATION (REFTEL). OLEAS HAD HIT HARD AT THE GOE'S POLICY OF CLOSE RELATIONS WITH PERU, AND HE ALSO CALLED FOR A RENEWAL OF THE CIVILIAN POLITICAL PROCESS, BEGINNING WITH ELECTIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. OLEAS IS BEING SOUGHT, ACCORDING TO MINISTER POVEDA, "SO THAT HE CAN ANSWER FOR HIS INJURIOUS EXPRESSIONS WHICH ARE AN ATTEMPT AGAINST THE DIGNITY OF THE GOVERNMENT AND OF THE ARMED FORCES".

2. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, POVEDA DENIED THAT LIBERAL POLITICIANS FRANCISCO HUERTA AND ABDON CALDERON WERE BEING SOUGHT AND, INDEED, THE GUAYAQUIL PRESS HAS CEASED ITS DAILY REPORTS OF POLICE "INQUIRIES" AFTER THEIR WHEREABOUTS. THIS, IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THE LATTER TWO, COLLEAGUES OF OLEAS IN THE DEMOCRATIC RESTORATION FRONT, HAD SPOKEN OUT AGAINST THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOE AT CONSIDERABLY GREATER LENGTH. WE CAN ONLY ASCRIBE THIS

SEEMING INCONSISTANCY TO POVEDA'S HIGHLY PERSONAL STYLE - OR IT MIGHT NOW BE THE TURN OF OLEAS, PREVIOUSLY UNSCATHED, TO SPEND SOME TIME IN JAIL.

3. ALSO UNDER ORDER OF ARREST - AGAIN - IS ALFONSO ARROYO ROBELLY, FORMER MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES DURING THE VELASCO ADMINISTRATION. ARROYO, WIDELY CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MORE EGREGIOUS CROOKS OF THAT ERA, HAD PREVIOUSLY SPENT ABOUT A YEAR IN CONFINEMENT AS THE PRESENT MILITARY GOVERNMENT UNSUCCESSFULLY TRIED TO BUILD AN AIRTIGHT LEGAL CASE AGAINST HIM. ARROYO IS A PARTICULAR BETE NOIR OF THE NAVY, WHO ACCUSE HIM OF HAVING DIVERTED TUNA BOAT FINES FROM THE NAVY'S COFFERS TO HIS OWN USES. IN SPITE OF THIS, HE MIGHT HAVE REMAINED FREE INDEFINITELY HAD HE NOT, SOME WEEKS AGO, COMMITTED THE IMPRUDENCE OF PUBLICLY ATTACKING THE NOW NAVY-RUN MINISTRY FOR ITS HANDLING OF THE OIL REFINERY PROJECT (QUITO 6573). OF COURSE, THE GOE HAS NOT BEEN ABOVE CRITICISM (OR SUSPICION) BUT TO HAVE ITS PERFORMANCE COMPARED UNFAVORABLY WITH THAT OF ARROYO MUST HAVE BEEN THE LAST STRAW FOR MINISTER JARRIN AND HIS NAVY COLLEAGUES. ARROYO HAS NOW GONE INTO HIDING, BUT NOT WITHOUT FIRST ATTACKING THE NEW INDICTMENTS AS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED AND LEGALLY DEFECTIVE. THE FACT THAT HE IS RIGHT ON BOTH COUNTS IS NOT LIKELY TO ADVANCE HIS CAUSE, HOWEVER.

4. THESE TWO INCIDENTS, OTHERWISE UNRELATED, ILLUSTRATE THE PRESENT GOE'S DETERMINATION TO ACT AS IT SEES BEST AND TO TOLERATE NO UNDERMINING OF ITS AUTHORITY -- LEAST OF ALL BY PROFESSIONAL POLITICIANS. THE GOE CONTINUES TO TOLERATE A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS DISCUSSION AND CRITICISM OF ITS PERFORMANCE; THIS REFLECTS ITS SELF-CONFIDENCE AND THE ALMOST NON-EXISTENT SUPPORT FOR "OLD-POL" CIVILIAN OPPOSITIONISTS. THERE ARE CERTAIN TABOOS, HOWEVER, AND CRITICISM AD HOMINEM (AT LEAST OF MILITARY PERSONALITIES) OR A RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE ARE TWO OF THE MOST OBVIOUS.

5. ALSO OF INTEREST IS THE SMOOTH AND CONFIDENT PERFORMANCE OF RADM POVEDA IN THE KEY PORTFOLIO OF GOVERNMENT MINISTER, IN CONTRAST TO HIS HEAVY-HANDED AND PROVOCATIVE PREDECESSORS. POVEDA COMES ACROSS AS INTELLIGENT AND ARTICULATE, AND HE HAS MORE THAN HELD HIS OWN IN Q-AND-A SESSIONS WITH THE PRESS WHILE BECOMING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT'S PRINCIPAL SPOKESMAN. HE HAS BEEN A RELATIVELY SUBTLE OPERATOR AND SEEMS TO RELY CONSIDERABLY ON JAWBONING AND ONE-ON-ONE PRIVATE SESSIONS TO KEEP THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN LINE. INTERESTINGLY, HE SEEMS TO BE ONLY IMPORTANT GOE MILITARY PERSONALITY WHO IS PERSONA GRATA IN GUAYAQUIL. HE HAD A LONG PERIOD OF NAVAL SERVICE THERE; CONTINUES TO MAINTAIN A HOME IN THE CITY, COMMUTING FROM QUITO ON WEEK-ENDS; AND IS WELCOME SOCIALLY AT SOME OF THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF

GUAYAQUIL'S POLITICO-ECONOMIC ELITE.
BREWSTER

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